

The Canterbury Estates  
Community Wildfire Protection Plan

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AN ACTION PLAN FOR WILDFIRE MITIGATION IN  
BAY MINETTE, ALABAMA

May 11, 2006

Prepared by     South Alabama Regional Planning Commission  
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The following report is a collaborative effort between various entities. The representatives listed below comprise the core decision-making team responsible for this report and mutually agree on the plan's contents:

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## **I. OBJECTIVES**

The objective of the following report is to set clear priorities for the implementation of wildfire mitigation in Canterbury Estates. This includes prioritized recommendations as to the appropriate types and methods of fuel reduction and structure ignitability reduction that will protect this community and its essential infrastructure. It also includes a plan for wildfire suppression.

## **II. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION**

A task force convened in April of 2005 to assess risks and develop the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The group, titled Canterbury Firewise Board is comprised of representatives from Canterbury Property Owner Association, South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, Alabama Forestry Commission, Resource Conservation and Development Council, and the City of Bay Minette Fire Department.

## **III. COMMUNITY BACKGROUND AND EXISTING SITUATION**

### **Background**

Canterbury Estates was established by F&M Land Company, Inc. in January of 1996. The subdivision is located within the incorporated limits of Bay Minette, Alabama. The vegetation is primarily Southern Rough and with an inter-mix of hardwoods. The subdivision sits on a man-made lake. The development philosophy was to offer families a place to build single-family homes surrounded by nature in close proximity to downtown Bay Minette. The majority of homes are constructed of brick with composite shingle roofs.

### **Development**

The property totals approximately 265 acres with 97 half-acre lots, four acres of water and the remaining acres in roads, easements and common areas. Houses have been built on 52 of 97 property lots. The property is about 53% developed. Undeveloped lots are scattered among the houses and are allowed to grow naturally.

### **Hazard Rating**

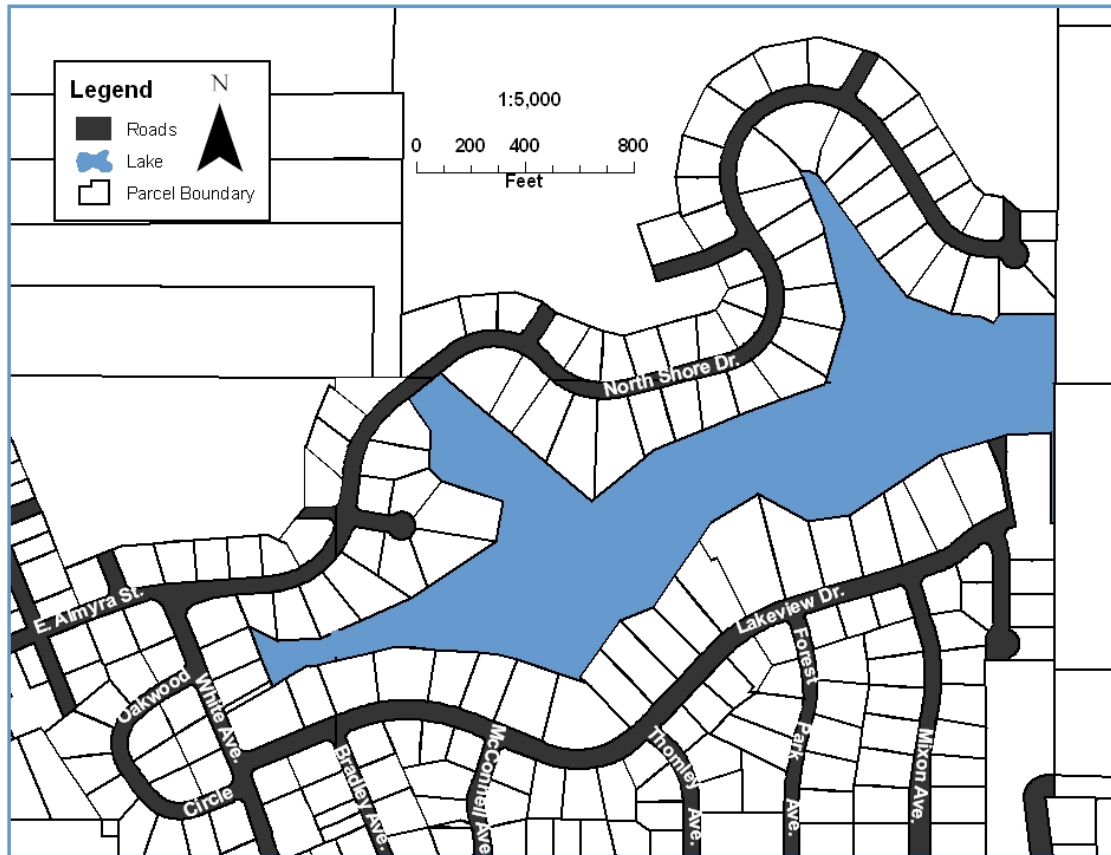
The Alabama Forestry Commission and the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission conducted the wildland fire risk assessment in Canterbury Estates in April 2005. Canterbury received a score of 44, placing it in the “moderate risk” hazard range.

### **Fire History**

Alabama Forestry Commission records indicate that wildland fires are not common to Canterbury Estates and the surrounding property. The five-year fire history of Canterbury Estates shows that, in a one mile area there were three fires. The cause of two of the fires was arson, resulting in average loss of nine acres. Debris burning caused the third fire. The acreage loss for this fire was approximately eight acres.

## IV. COMMUNITY BASE MAP

### Canterbury Estates



## V. COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

### Executive Summary

A fire risk assessment was completed on April 7, 2005 by the Alabama Forestry Commission and the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission. The overall score utilizing the Woodland Subdivision Fire Hazard Rating tool was 44, placing Canterbury in the “Moderate Risk” Fire Hazard Scale. This tool was developed and adopted by the Firewise Advisory Council of Southwest Alabama. The result of this tool was qualified against other risk assessment tools from the Florida Division of Forestry, North Carolina Division of Forestry, and the Virginia Department of Forestry. Each tool varied slightly in the usage of terms but the end result remained with Canterbury falling into the “Moderate Risk” zone. All of these instruments take into consideration accessibility, vegetation (based on fuel models), topography, roofing assembly, building construction, and availability of fire protection resources, placement of gas and electric utilities, and additional rating factors.

Areas to Be Evaluated	County/Community/Subdivision Name	Subdivision Type*
Subdivision Type	Canterbury Estates	Boundary and intermix interface
Fire History of Community and/or Adjacent Lands**		
Relative Frequency and Location	Infrequent within one mile of subdivision	
Common Causes	Debris Burning and Arson	
Factors Influencing Fire Probability	Moderate accumulation of hazardous vegetation next to the structures, large adjacent areas of forest or wildland with accumulated wildland fuels and no prescribed burning program for fuel management, and developed lots adjacent to undeveloped lots containing large accumulations of wildland fuels.	
Areas of Future Concern	Undeveloped lots	
Fuel Type		Hazard Rating
High-Hazard Fuels	Woodland (Mixed upland forest with fairly open understory with leaf litter and small shrubs)	4
Terrain Type		Hazard Rating
Steep slopes	16-25%	3
Soil Moisture and Drainage		Hazard Rating

Design Characteristics		Hazard Rating
Roof and Siding	Non-combustible roof and non-combustible siding materials	1
Safety Zone		Hazard Rating
Percentage of homes with 30 foot defensible space	30% of homes	3
Access		Hazard Rating
Ingress/Egress	There is only one means of access into the subdivision	3
Dead End Road	Dead end roads do not have adequate turnarounds such as 100 foot wide Cul-de-sac	3
Other		Hazard Rating
Response	Many roads and streets are not marked with names or numbers on clearly visible signs	2
Response	Individual home locations or addresses are not marked	2
Plow line	Easy access	1
Hand line	Easy access	1

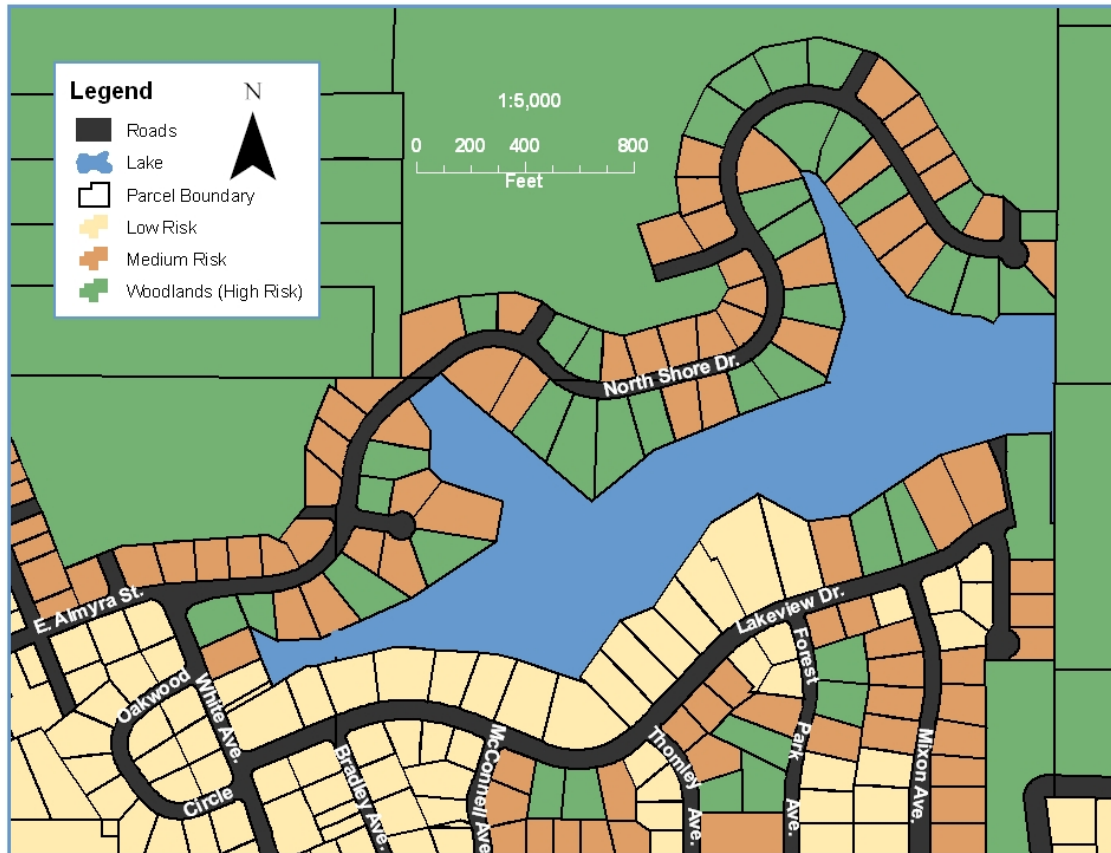
Fuel Hazard Rating Total 04 x Terrain Hazard Rating Total 07 + Structure Hazard Rating Total 01 + Safety Zone Rating Total 03 + Additional Factor Rating Total 12 = 44

#### FIRE HAZARD SCALE

Low Risk            0-35  
Moderate Risk    36-69  
High Risk         70-100

## VI. COMMUNITY HAZARDS MAP

### Canterbury Estates





## VII. PRIORITIZED MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

### Executive Summary

The following recommendations were developed by the Canterbury Firewise Board as a result of the Community Wildfire Risk Assessment. The recommendations are prioritized based on the following factors: timeframe for completion, cost, and outside resources. The foundational information was gathered from the Wildfire Risk Assessment and meetings with the Canterbury Homeowner Association Board of Directors.

### Proposed Community Hazard Reduction Priorities

Community Wildland Fuel Reduction Priorities		
Treatment Area	Treatment Types	Treatment Method(s)
1. Establish Permanent Firebreak	Create 100 foot permanent fire break	Mechanical remove vegetation between
2. All Structures	Create minimum of 30-feet of defensible space*	Trim shrubs and vines to 30 feet from structures, trim overhanging limbs, replace flammable plant varieties, and remove vegetation around chimneys.
3. Applicable Structures	Reduce structural ignitability*	Clean flammable vegetative material from roofs and gutters, store firewood appropriately, install skirting around raised access, replace pine needles and mulch around plantings with less flammable landscaping materials or keep moist.
4. Community Clean-up Day	Cutting, mowing, pruning*	Cut, prune, and mow vegetation in shared community spaces.
5. Codes and Covenants	Amend subdivision covenants*	Amend covenants and restrictions for Canterbury to provide better protection: create defensible space, improve the visibility of house numbers, enclose elevated decks, store firewood appropriately, require Class A roofing materials, provide for maintenance of community lots, and restrict debris burning.
*Actions to be taken by homeowners and community stakeholders.		

Proposed Community Education and Outreach Priorities		
1. Conduct “How to have a Firewise Home” workshop	Annual Property Owners’ Assoc	Annual Meeting
2. Add a “Firewise Tip” to quarterly newsletter	Property Owners’ Assoc	Newsletter
3. Distribute “Fire Safe” information	Fire Prevention Week	With assistance from AFC and Bay Minette Fire Dept.
*Eligible under the HFRA for minimum (50%) WUI funding		

Proposed Improvement of Wildland Fire Response Priorities		
1. Access	Additional Emergency Exit	MOU with land owner on other side of lake dam.
2. Visibility	Signage	Replace missing street signs
3. Visibility	Numbering	Mark house numbers on mailboxes or curbs for all occupied lots.

## VIII. ACTION PLAN

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

[IDENTIFY EACH OF THE ROLES AND THEIR ACCOMPANYING RESPONSIBILITIES NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTION PLAN.]

### **Funding Needs**

[OUTLINE NEEDED FUNDING AND POTENTIAL SOURCES.]

Project	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source(s)
1. Permanent Fire Break	\$10,800	AFC/RC&D Grant
2. Defensible Space	Part of above	AFC/RC&D Grant
3. Amending Covenants		Canterbury POA and SARPC

### **Timetables (highest priority projects)**

[FOR EACH PROJECT, PROVIDE AN ESTIMATED DURATION, START DATE, AND FINISH DATE. LIST PROJECTS IN ORDER OF PRIORITY.]

Project (in order of priority)	Duration	Start Date	Finish Date
1. Permanent Fuelbreak (mulched)		1/2005	8/2006
2. Defensible Space		1/2005	8/2006
3. Amend Covenants		4/2006	10/2006

### **Assessment Strategy**

[DESCRIBE THE STRATEGY YOU WILL USE TO ASSESS YOUR PLAN'S EFFECTIVENESS.]

A risk assessment will be conducted to re-assess wildfire hazards. The hazard mitigation plan will be updated as needs arise or priorities change.

Annual Firewise Work Days (clean-up days) is recommended. Volunteer time can count toward meeting financial requirement for Firewise Community USA recertification as in-kind contribution.

Mitigation efforts that are recurring (such as mowing, burning, clearing of defensible space) will be incorporated into an annual renewal of the original action plan and reflected on the Firewise USA recertification application.